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The PENUMBRA

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ON THE RACKS



ALIEN ENCOUNTERS no. 1: Great art! Great stories! Great Science Fiction! With a fabulous cover painting by Joe Chiodo, this is the replacement for Alien Worlds. A must!

JOHN BOLTON'S "Halls of Horror" 1 Part 1 of 2 containing short stories illustrated by Bolton never before seen in the U.S. All with a wraparound cover painting.



CROSSFIRE 12 Dave Stevens joins the team with an incredible cover featuring "The 24th Annual Death of Marilyn Monroe." A mystery you'll never forget.

JOHN BOLTON'S "Halls of Horror" 2 The second part of this Micro-Series by one of comics' most popular illustrators. A feast for horror and art fans.



DNAGENTS 23 "The Detonator" introduces a new villain with a novel approach to problems: whatever it is, he blows it up! Plus, a tale of Sham's past called "Baby Face."

AXA IN COLOR In her first color graphic novel, Axa wields her sword to find a better world a hundred years in the future. Romero's paintings throughout.



THE MASKED MAN 4 "The Letter" is another winner from B.C. Boyer. The Masked Man's growing fame brings him a fan letter from a mysterious woman ... and Maggie Brown is jealous!

THE FIESTA CAFE

I've always wanted to live in a diner. Not a fast food joint, mind you, but a regular old-fashioned diner, with a neon sign out front and a row of chrome-footed stools along the counter. The kind of place with dark green vinyl booths and a Seeburg jukebox, and checkered linoleum tile floors. The kind of place where a middle-aged waitress named Lucille calls out your order for a grilled cheese sandwich to a middle-aged cook named Joe and nobody asks if Lucille and Joe are married to each other 'cause it doesn't matter much after all these years.

I have always wanted to live in a diner for a number of reasons. I like the way people ask what kinds of pies they have today in a diner, for instance, and I like the way old men say hello to other old men in a diner. I don't like to cook, and if I lived in a diner, I could ask for lots of tomato juice and I wouldn't even mind paying for it by the glass.

There would be a coin operated "Ask Swami" machine (the kind that doubles as a menu holder) and I could get my fortune read for a penny if I lived in a diner. I could always have blue cheese dressing on my salad if I lived in a diner. And at dusk, when they turned the neon sign on, I could watch it flash and glow

FIESTA CAFE

GOOD FOOD if I lived in a diner.

It's dusk right now as I write this, and we are in our new offices, in the old train station overlooking Main Street in Guerneville, California. I'm not in a diner but I think I am, because today we put in our very own neon sign. It hangs in the window above me and to the right. It glows redly, in cursive script:

COMICS

This is a kind of heaven to me, to have a neon sign. No, we didn't "need" it — this isn't a retail store and we don't try to attract passersby to see us work. I dunno. We just

wanted it, that's all. And tomorrow we'll be picking up our second neon sign, the one that has our logo on it in red and yellow and green. And after that, John Wilcox, a colourist who lives in Connecticut, will send me one of his famous cheesecakes by Federal Express (he promised to!) and Dean will make some coffee and Sean will find some plates and forks in the back room and maybe Tom Yeates will drop by on his way from Jenner to Santa Rosa, . . . and for one moment we will be here, in a diner that doesn't exist outside my mind, forever.

catherine yronwode

IN YOUR HANDS

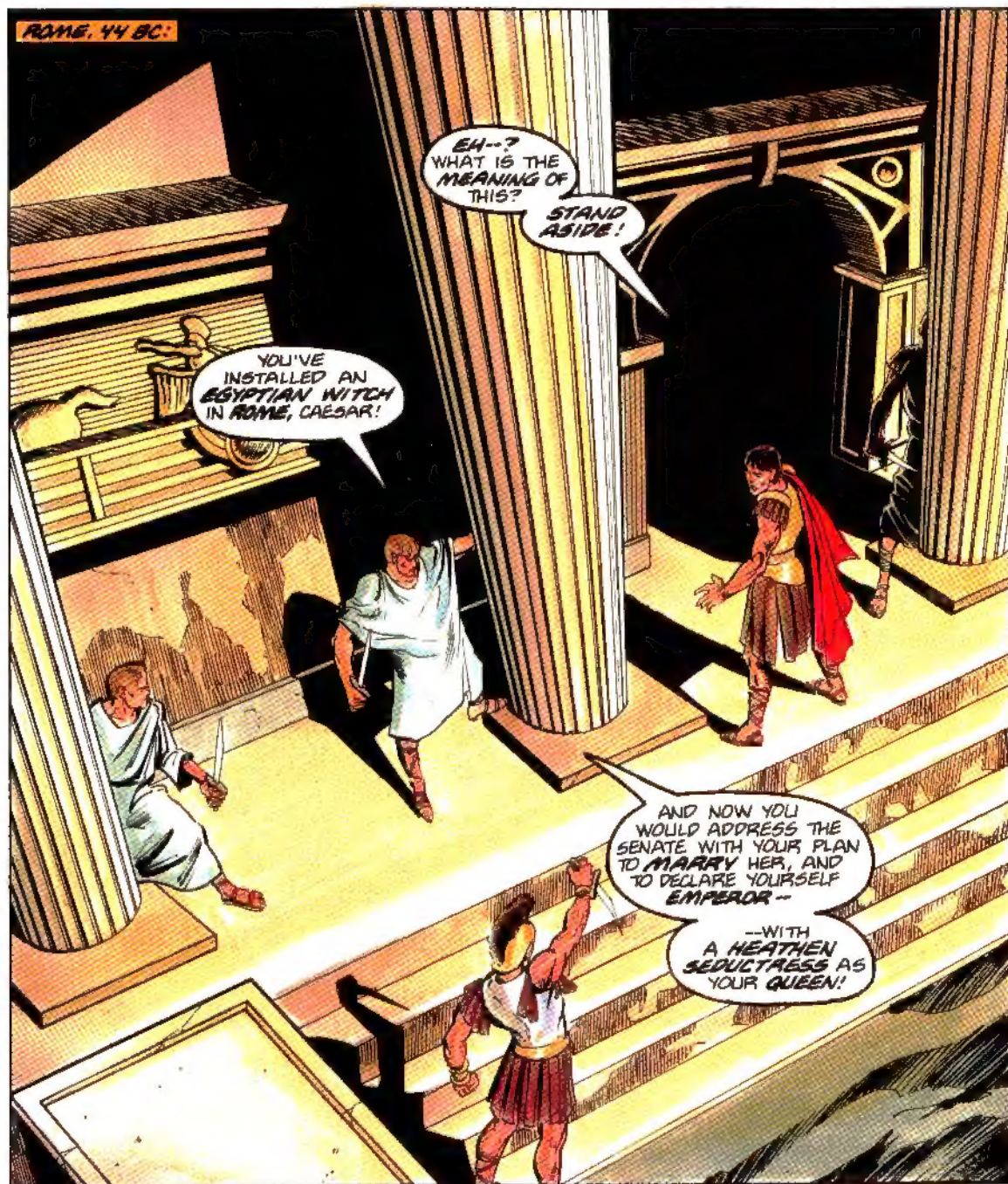
Something has caused the time-bound Puer Artemis to leave the safety of 1969 San Francisco . . . and journey to ancient Rome. This month writer Doug Moench is joined by artists Mike Harris, Art Nichols and Tom Yeates in a story of intrigue and betrayal among the Corinthian columns.



"I VISITED OTHER PLACES JUST IN CASE...BUT NOW MY JOB IS DONE. THE WAY TIME SOLVES THINGS IS AN ENIGMA. GOD USES UP CENTURIES IN AN INCREDIBLE FASHION. AS WE DO MINUTES. WHAT I'VE GOT TO DO NOW IS TURN THE PAST INTO THE PRESENT."--JEAN COCTEAU, 1945.

THE CLEOPATRA EXCHANGE

ROME, 44 BC:



DOUG MOENCH
WRITER

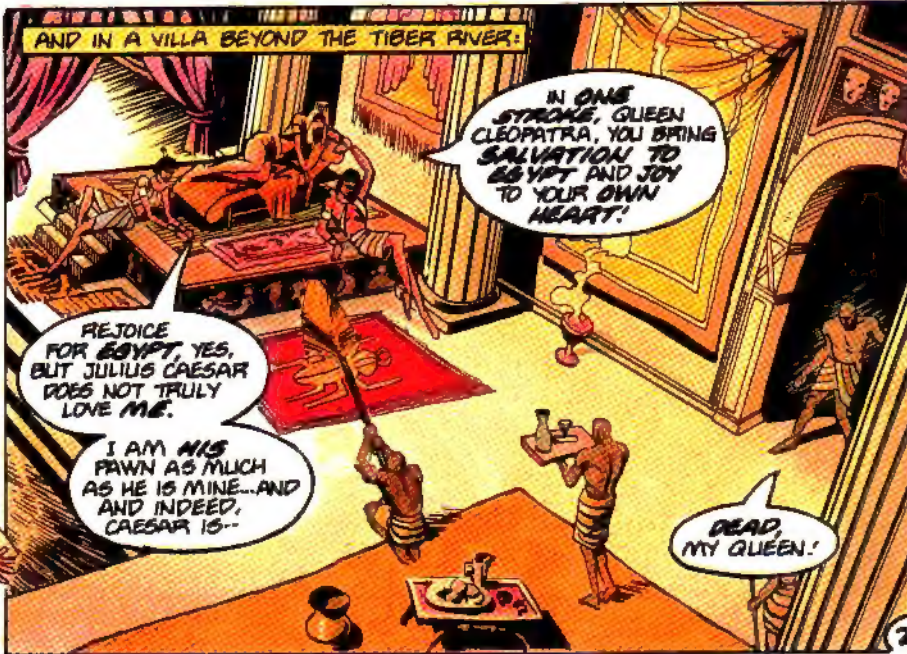
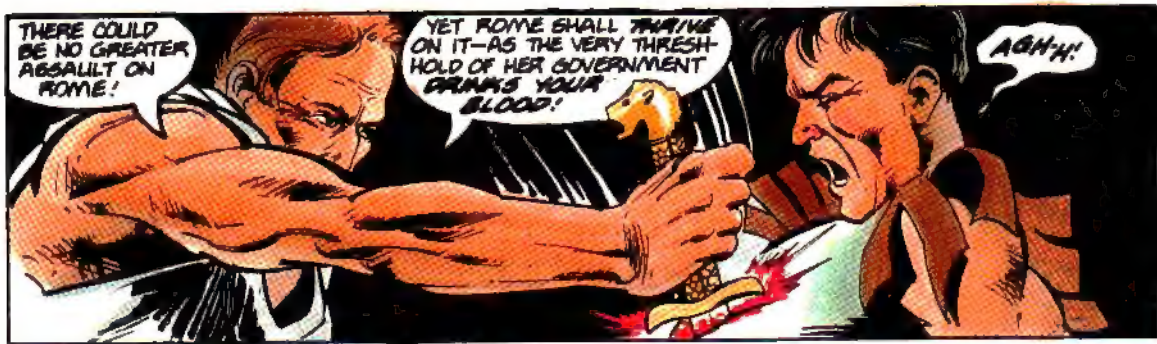
MIKE HARRIS
LAYOUTS

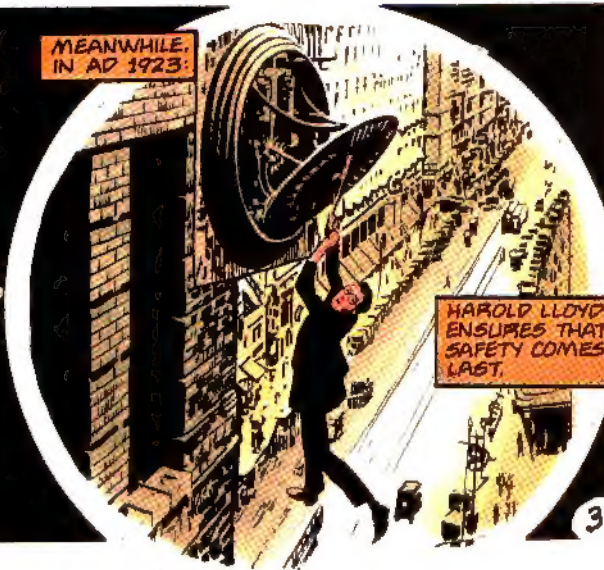
ART NICHOLS
& TOM YEATS
FINISHED ART

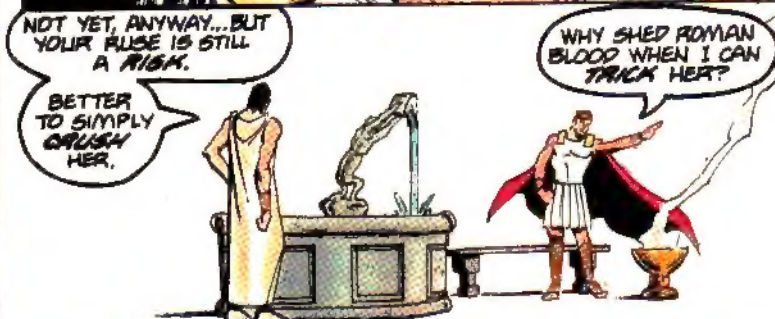
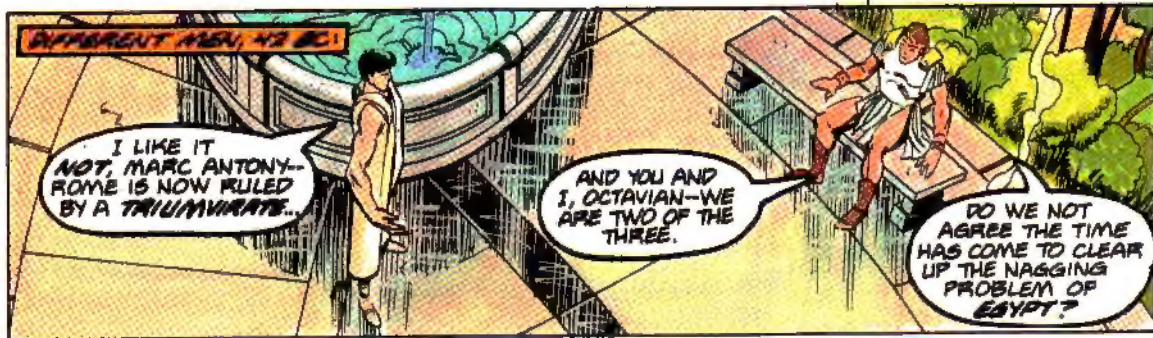
CARRIE SPIEGLE
LETTERER

STEVE OLIFF
COLORISTS
SAM PARSONS

CAT@YACONWODE
EDITOR







THE MACEDONIAN TEMPTRESS

EVEN AT THAT MOMENT, SHIMMERING IN THE FEVER OF AN UNMASKED SUN, THE GOLDEN BARGE GENTLY PLYED THE CYDNUS RIVER, AS THE VERY ANTITHESIS OF A ROMAN WARSHIP.

EGYPTIAN IN DESIGN AND AS PATIENT AS A DREAM OF SHIFTING SAND, DRIFTING WATER, IT WAS VIVID IN ITS LANGUOR.

AMONG THE MANY QUALITIES REFLECTED IN ITS PROUD, STATELY SURGES WERE EQUAL MEASURES OF TRANQUIL MAJESTY, SEDUCTIVE MYSTERY, AND HAUNTING BEAUTY... ALL THE SHADES OF CLEOPATRA HERSELF.

AND LIKE THE QUEEN, TOO, ONLY ITS CUNNING WAS CONCEALED.

MURMURS OF AWE BREATHED FROM BOTH BANKS AS THE BARGE NEARED TARSUS IN ASIA MINOR.

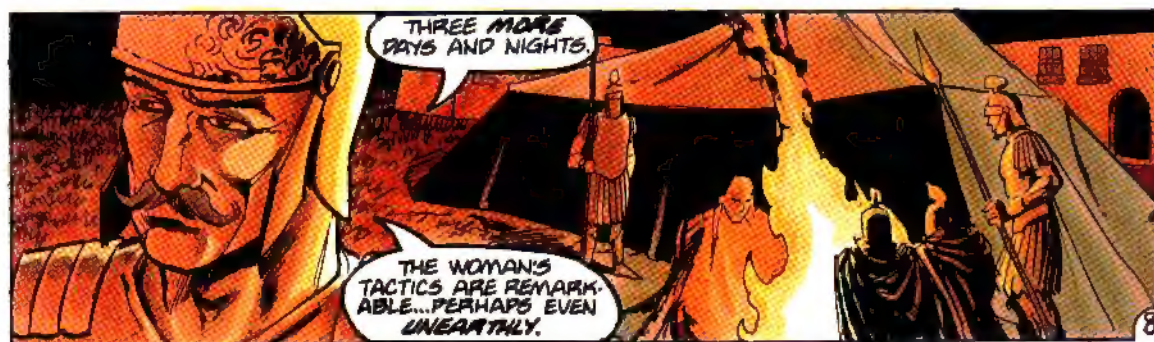
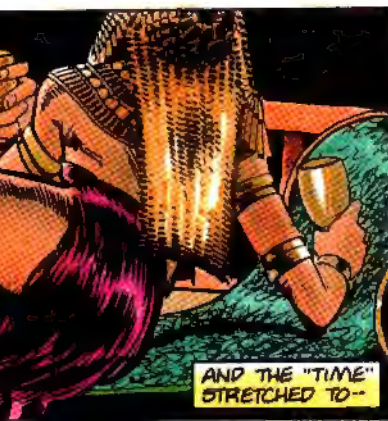
THEN IT ANCHORED IN THE CITY AND WAS IMMEDIATELY SURROUNDED BY GREAT BUSTLE...

...BUT LIKE A GOLDEN PETAL FLOATING ON SPELLBOUND WATERS, THE BARGE SIMPLY RESTED.

AND CLEOPATRA, IN NO HURRY, WAITED.









BRINGING US HERE TO 31 BC, ELEVEN YEARS LATER

SORRY ABOUT PLAYING YOU FOR A SLAVE, PUER, BUT THE GAMBIT MUST BE CONVINCING

AIN'T THE CHAINS, CAZA, NOR THE BOGUS TREATMENT--IT'S THE EFFECTS OF THE SHIFT TRIP GOT ME DOWN



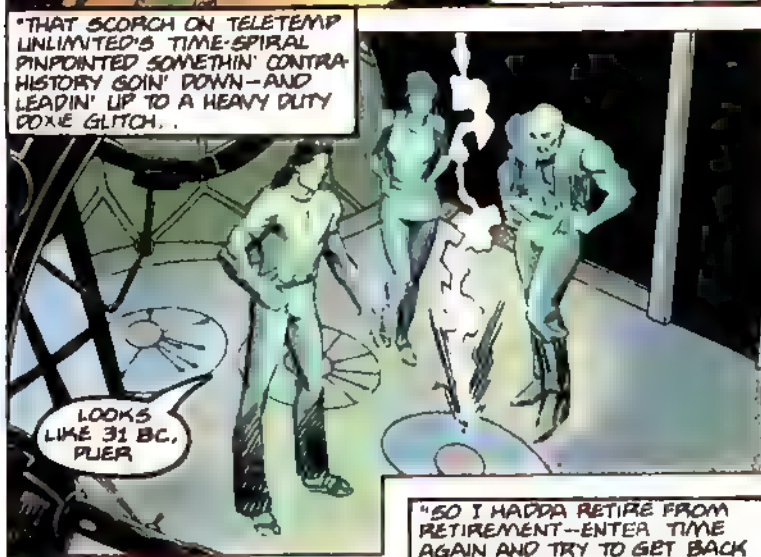
ALL I WANT IS TO BE BACK ON 23RD STREET SNIFFIN' INCENSE AND READIN' COMIX--ZAP #2 JUST CAME IN BEFORE WE SPLIT.

THEN, MUCH AS I APPRECIATE IT, MAYBE YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE COME.



CUT ME SOME SLACK, CAZA

YOU KNOW I HADDA COME BACK HERE WITH YOU AN' BRIDGE...



"THAT SCORCH ON TELETEMP UNLIMITED'S TIME-SPIRAL PINPOINTED SOMETHIN' CONTRA-HISTORY GOIN' DOWN--AND LEADIN' UP TO A HEAVY DUTY DOXXE GLITCH."

LOOKS LIKE 31 BC, PUER



"BUT I JUST COULDN'T MAKE MY DREAM-DOXXE KICK IN--COULDN'T EVEN FIND 31 BC

NO USE, CAZA--NOTHIN' BUT FAITS, AND I DON'T MEAN NO CAT.

"SO I HADDA RETIRE FROM RETIREMENT--ENTER TIME AGAIN AND TRY TO GET BACK IN TUNE WITH MY POWER--OR I'M JUST A DRAG ON YOU AND MYSELF, FAKIN' IT IN THE DOOMED HIPPIE YEARS."



THIS GONNA BE BAD, CAZA

HE WAS RIGHT

...AND WE REACH THE PROMONTORY AT ACTIUM.

WHAT'S SO BAD ABOUT RUNNING A HEAD SHOP IN '69, PUER?

NOTHIN', BRIDGE, IF YOU CAN DIG IT, BUT I ONLY DO IT 'CAUSE ALL THAT TIME-TRIPPIN' WITH YOUR MAN CATA NEARLY WEIRDED ME OUT.

BELOW, TWO LOVERS FACE THE WRATH OF AN EMPIRE SCORPED...

CHAOS ON WATER -THE DECISIVE NAVAL BATTLE AT ACTIUM, RIGHT ON SCHEDULE, SO NO EVIDENCE HERE OF WHAT'S CAUSING THAT SCORCH.

LOOKS LIKE THE OUTCOME'S GONNA JIVE TOO-CLEO AND ANTONY AIN'T GOT A PRAYER AGAINST ALL THOSE ROMAN WARSHIPS.

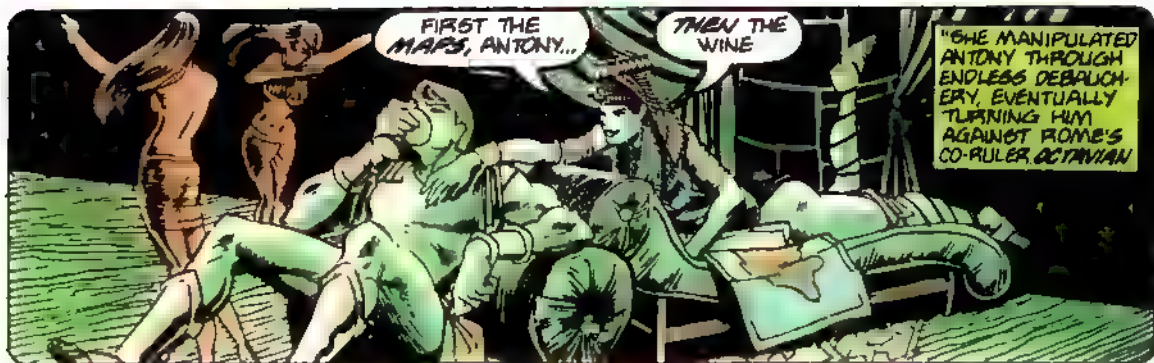


'SCUSE MY IGNORANCE, BOYS, BUT HOW'D IT GET TO THIS POINT?

IT GOES BACK, ELEVEN YEARS, BRIDGET, TO THE NIGHTS WHEN CLEOPATRA SEDUCED MARC ANTONY ON HER GOLDEN BARGE...

"ANTONY WENT TO ALEXANDRIA TWISTED AROUND CLEOPATRA'S LITTLE FINGER, TREATING HER NOT AS A PUPPET SOVEREIGN OF ROME BUT AS AN INDEPENDENT MONARCH.



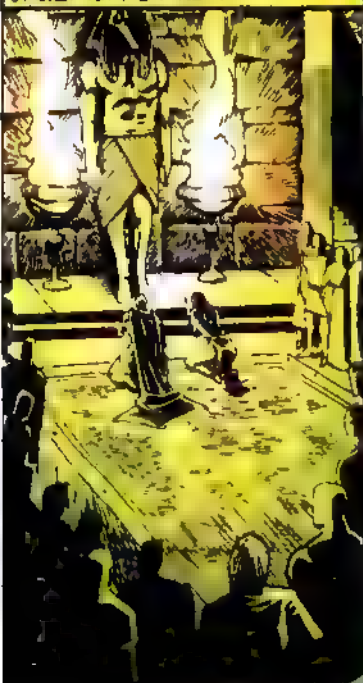


FIRST THE
MAPS, ANTONY...

THEN THE
WINE

"SHE MANIPULATED
ANTONY THROUGH
ENDLESS DEBAUCH-
ERY, EVENTUALLY
TURNING HIM
AGAINST ROME'S
CO-RULER, OCTAVIAN

"IN TURN, ROME'S DISSENTMENT
WITH ANTONY GREW TO HATRED
WHEN HE MARRIED CLEOPATRA,
HAVING TWO SONS AND A
DAUGHTER BY HER



"FINALLY, OCTAVIAN REVEALED TO
THE ROMAN SENATE THAT
ANTONY PLANNED TO TRANSFER
THE CAPITAL FROM ROME TO
ALEXANDRIA



"WAR WAS SWIFTLY
DECLARED ON
CLEOPATRA AND
HER TRAITOROUS
CONSORT..."

...AND NOW ELEVEN YEARS OF
LOVE AND BLOOD CULMINATE
IN THIS BATTLE OF ACTIUM.



TIDE'S
ALREADY TURNIN'
AGAINST ANTONY
AND CLEO.
CAZA...

WON'T BE
LONG BEFORE
... AHA!

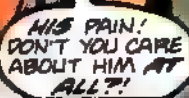
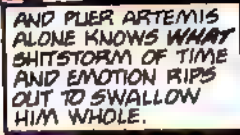


WHAT'S
WRONG,
PUER?



IT... IT'S
WORMIN'... THE
CLOSENESS TO THIS
TURNING POINT... EVEN
WITHOUT MY
HELMET...

I'M TURNING
IN AGAIN... POWER'S
RETURNING TO ME
... STARTING TO-





YOU DO IT QUICKLY, BRIDGET-- BUT BELIEVE ME, IT DOESN'T GET ANY EASIER WITH TIME.

COME ON--WE'LL WATCH THE REST OF THE BATTLE FOR CLUES.

IF WE SEE ANY, WE CAN SHAKE PUER OUT OF HIS SEIZURE...



BUT DOWN ON WATER FOULED BY FIRE AND BLOOD--

--THE CALL FOR RETREAT IS SOUNDED FROM CLEOPATRA'S FLAGSHIP.



ANTONY REACTS WITH BITTER FRUSTRATION--

DAMN HER!

--BUT WILL NEVERTHELESS CONCEDE THE CAUSE IS DOOMED...



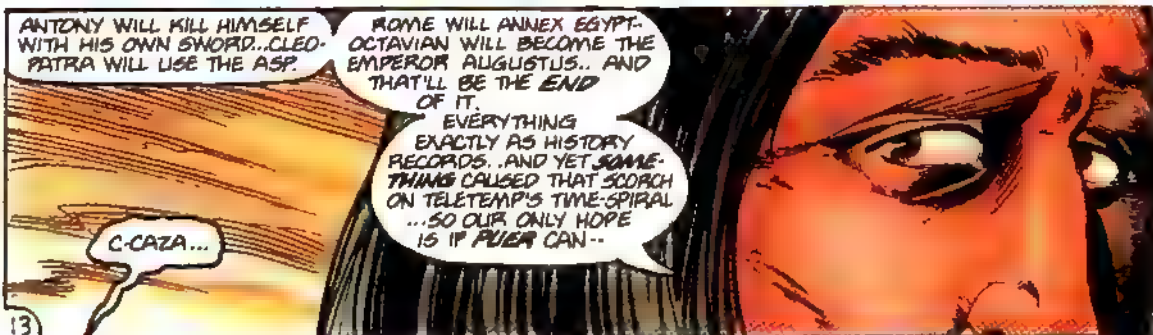
...AND JOIN THE RETREAT.

NOTHING DIFFERENT--NOT ONE DIVERGENCE FROM HISTORY--NOT A SINGLE CLUE.

THEY'LL FLEE TO ALEXANDRIA WITH THE ROMANS IN PURSUIT, AND FOR ALL PRACTICAL PURPOSES IT'S ALREADY OVER.



ALL THAT REMAINS IS FOR CLEOPATRA TO ATTEMPT WINNING OCTAVIAN'S LOVE, AS SHE DID WITH CAESAR AND ANTONY--BUT THIS TIME SHE'LL FAIL.



ANTONY WILL KILL HIMSELF WITH HIS OWN SWORD..CLEOPATRA WILL USE THE ASP.

ROME WILL ANNEX EGYPT. OCTAVIAN WILL BECOME THE EMPEROR AUGUSTUS.. AND THAT'LL BE THE END OF IT.

EVERYTHING EXACTLY AS HISTORY RECORDS..AND YET SOMETHING CAUSED THAT SCORCH ON TELETEMP'S TIME-SPIRAL ...SO OUR ONLY HOPE IS IF PUER CAN--

C.CAZA...



I... I FOUND IT...THE GROWING GLITCH...ITS SEED WAS PLANTED JUST BEFORE THIS NAVAL BATTLE...

TELL ME, PUER!



YES, I... I CAN STILL "SEE" IT, CAZA... A MYSTERIOUS WOMAN IN DISGUISE...CLAIMING TO REPRESENT SOMEONE OF GREAT POWER...AND SHE ENGAGED THE SERVICES OF AN EXPATRIATE ROMAN ASSASSIN IN ALEXANDRIA...

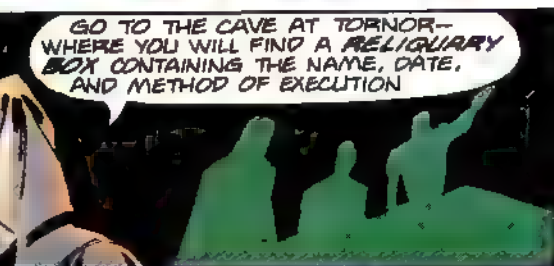
GO ON, PUER.

"SHE PAID HIM A TENTH OF HIS FEE, PROMISING HIM THE REST UPON COMPLETION..."



AND WHOM AM I TO KILL, WOMAN?

THE NAME IS TOO DANGEROUS TO SPEAK, HERE OR ANYWHERE.



GO TO THE CAVE AT TORNOR-- WHERE YOU WILL FIND A RELIQUARY BOX CONTAINING THE NAME, DATE, AND METHOD OF EXECUTION



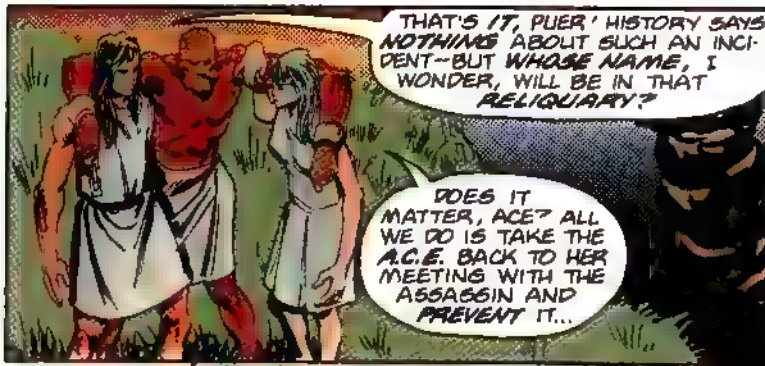
PROOF OF THE KILL MUST BE DELIVERED TO THE PALACE.

NOW GO-- AND SPEAK TO NO ONE.



"SOMEHOW, CAZA, I KNEW WHO THE WOMAN WAS, EVEN AS THE ASSASSIN LEFT THE TAVERN...EVEN BEFORE I SAW HER HORROR SHOW VERSION OF A MONA LISA SMILE BEHIND HER BRIEFLY LOWERED VEIL..."

"IT WAS THE LADY HERSELF--CLEOPATRA."



THAT'S IT, PUER! HISTORY SAYS NOTHING ABOUT SUCH AN INCIDENT--BUT WHOSE NAME, I WONDER, WILL BE IN THAT RELIQUARY?

DOES IT MATTER, ACE? ALL WE DO IS TAKE THE A.C.E. BACK TO HER MEETING WITH THE ASSASSIN AND PREVENT IT...

HOW 'BOUT THE DUDES TAKING THE BOX TO TORNOR, CAZA?

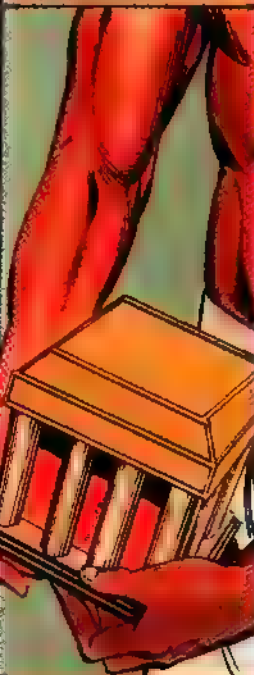
BUT SINCE THAT MEETING CAUSED THE SCORCH, BRIDGET, WE'D ONLY FAIL ENDLESSLY IN YESTERDAY--SO WE'VE GOT TO DEAL WITH THE REPERCUSSIONS SOMEWHERE UP THE LINE, MAKING THEM CONFORM WITH HISTORY.



IF YOU CAN "SEE" THEIR ROUTE, PUER, IT'S A GOOD BET--BUT WE'LL HAVE TO INTERCEPT THEM AT THE FIRST MOMENT BEYOND THE BORDER OF THE SCORCH...

...HOPING THE SCORCH HASN'T YET GONE PAST THE RELIQUARY'S SUCCESSFUL DELIVERY TO THAT CAVE.

IT HASN'T--AND THE RELIQUARY IS A REPLICA OF CLEOPATRA'S PALACE AT ALEXANDRIA.



PRESSED AGAINST MY ARM, BRIDGET'S BODY TREMBLES.

JUST NERVES, I GUESS



AND THE TWO NUBIANS FREEZE AT THE RATTLE OF PUER'S CHAINS.



BUT THEN HE USES HIS VOCABULATOR TO SPEAK IN THEIR LANGUAGE...

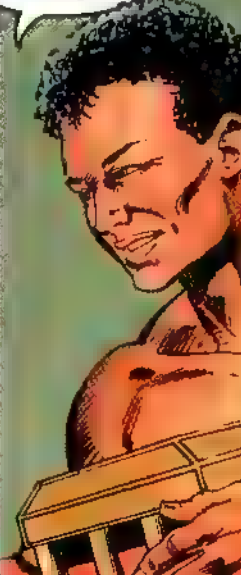
I AM AN ESCAPED SLAVE FROM ROME.



I WISH TO JOIN YOU AS A BETTER-TREATED EGYPTIAN SLAVE.

AND THEY SMILE.

WELCOME, BROTHER! WE'LL TAKE YOU TO ALEXANDRIA, BUT FIRST YOU MUST ACCOMPANY US WHILE WE DELIVER THIS BOX TO TORNOR.



IT WORKED...

...BUT BRIDGET IS STILL SKITTISH.

GOOD--WE MAY NOT HAVE TO DEAL WITH THE ASSASSIN AT ALL.

BUT WHY THIS WAY, ACE-- PUTTING FLIER AT SUCH RISK?

BECAUSE HE CAN PASS FOR ONE OF THEM...

I CAN'T.

BUT YOU COULD USE YOUR SCRAMBACK TO HYPNOTIZE--

THERE ARE TWO OF THEM, BRIDGET, AND EVEN WITH MY SCRAMBACK IT'S DIFFICULT TO HYPNOTIZE ONE MAN WHILE THE OTHER IS BEATING ON THE BACK OF MY HEAD.

NIGHT!

GET SOME REST, FRIEND

WE WILL REACH TORNOR BY MIDDAY TOMORROW, THEN TAKE YOU BACK TO ALEXANDRIA...

WHAT ABOUT THIS EGYPTIAN QUEENIE, ACE-- IS SHE REALLY THE HOT STUFF HISTORY MAKES OUT?

FIRST OF ALL, EVEN THOUGH SHE DECLARED HERSELF THE DAUGHTER OF THE SUN GOD RA, THERE ISN'T A SINGLE DROP OF EGYPTIAN BLOOD IN HER VEINS...

SHE'S ACTUALLY OF MACEDONIAN DESCENT, FROM THE LINE BEGUN BY ALEXANDER THE GREAT'S MARSHAL, PTOLEMY, BACK WHEN THEY CONQUERED EGYPT IN 323 BC--BUT YES, SHE'S NEVERTHELESS HOT STUFF...

"THE GREEK BIOGRAPHER PLUTARCH DESCRIBED HER VOICE AS 'AN INSTRUMENT OF MANY STRINGS,' FUN PROBABLY INTENDED.

"HE ALSO SAID, 'PLATO IDENTIFIES FOUR TYPES OF FLATTERY, BUT SHE HAD A THOUSAND.'

"SHE'S DOOMED TO ULTIMATE FAILURE--IF FLIER SUCCEEDS, ANYWAY--BUT SHE'S STILL THE ONLY PERSON OTHER THAN HANNIBAL TO STRIKE FEAR IN ROME.

"INTERESTINGLY, HANNIBAL ALSO COMMITTED SUICIDE RATHER THAN SURRENDERING TO THE ROMANS..."

...THOUGH I FEAR YOUR ESCAPE WILL BE SHORT...

...FOR EGYPT MAY SOON FALL, MAKING US ALL SLAVES OF ROME.

AND CLEO'S DESIGNS WERE EVEN MORE AUDACIOUS THAN HANNIBAL AND HIS ELEPHANTS--BECAUSE SHE ATTACKED ROME BY MEANS OF ROMANS.

HAHMM...

AND DO YOU ALSO FIND HER IRRESIS...

SHH, THEY'RE ASLEEP--AND FLIER'S MAKING HIS MOVE...

HOW COULD CAZA EVEN ASK ME TO DO THIS--TO BEAT THEM IN THEIR SLEEP AND YET NOT KILL THEM--?

--SO I DON'T CREATE A GLITCH THROUGH THEIR WRONG-TIME MURDERS?

HOW CAN I BE SURE I WON'T ICE 'EM?

HOW CAN I EVEN HIT 'EM-- WITH...WITH SLAVE CHAINS?

THE ORACLE HELP ME, I.. I--

NO!

IT'S HAPPENIN'-- WASHIN' OVER ME AGAIN--LIKE A BAD TRIP...

TASTE OF COPPER...JITTERS... EVERYTHING TOO BRIGHT AND SHARP. AND--

"I FEEL 'EM, LORD HELP ME, BUT I FEEL 'EM ALL--ALL THE OTHER TIMES I NEVER KNEW..."

"THE SAME PAIN THAT GNAWED AWAY TOO MUCH OF MY HEART AND MIND, FREAKED ME OUT AND SLAYED ME INTO COLD-EDGED HIDING AS A BURNT OUT HIPPIE IN 1969..."

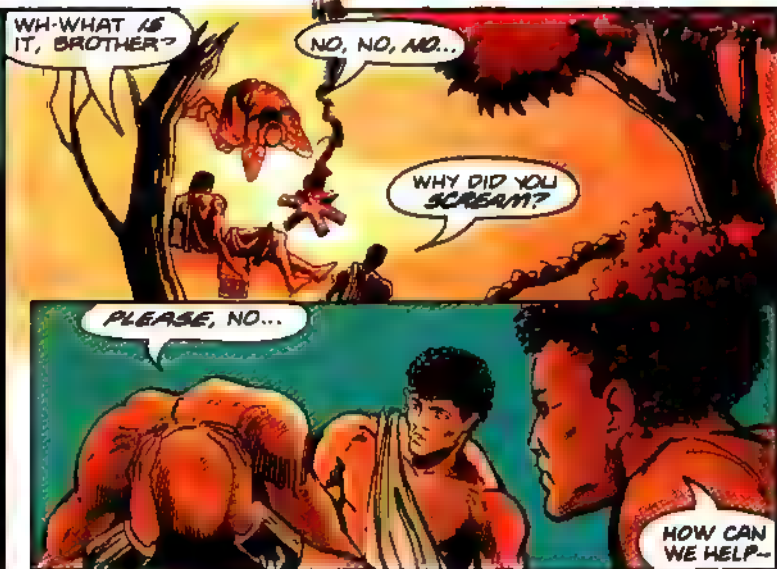
"AND THIS TIME, OH LORD, THIS TIME IT'S ALL SO MUCH WORSE, SPINNING ME FROM THAT MOTEL BALCONY INTO THE FIRELIT WOODS, FROM THE SLAVE SHACKS TO THE RIVERBANKS IN ATLANTA, FROM--"

NOOOO!!



SOMETHING'S WRONG!

PUER'S HAVING ANOTHER SEIZURE!



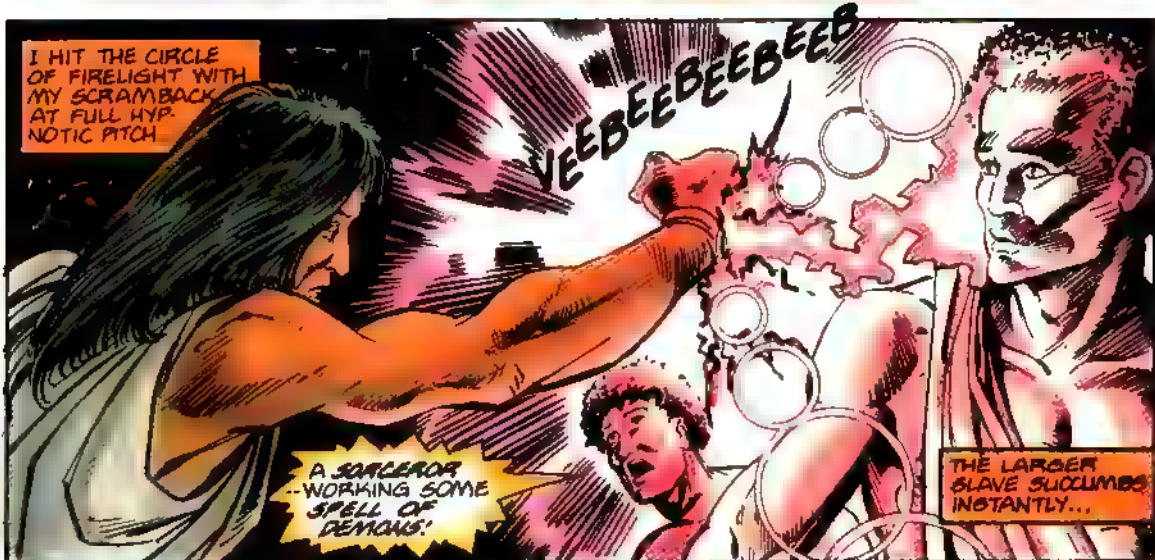
WH-WHAT IS IT, BROTHER?

NO, NO, NO...

WHY DID YOU SCREAM?

PLEASE, NO...

HOW CAN WE HELP...



I HIT THE CIRCLE OF FIRELIGHT WITH MY SCRAMBACK AT FULL HYPNOTIC PITCH

VEEBEEBEEB

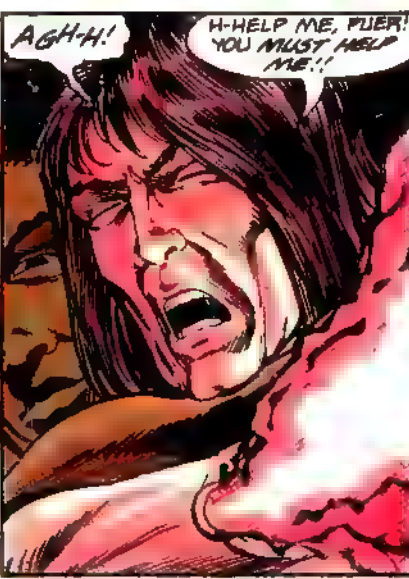
A SORCEROR --WORKING SOME SPELL OF DEMONS!

THE LARGER SLAVE SUCUMBES INSTANTLY...



... BUT AS EXPECTED, THE SMALLER MAN IS STILL TROUBLE.

I HAVE HIM, MY FRIENDS!



AGH-H!

H-HELP ME, PUER! YOU MUST HELP ME!!



C-CAZA...?

NO... OH, NO... NOT THIS...!

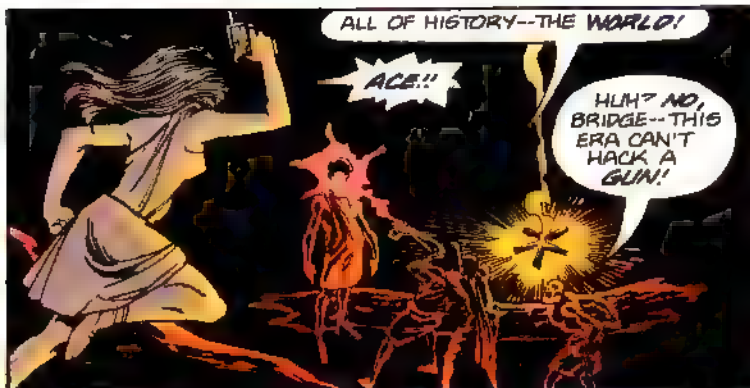
REALITY AGAIN...



AND NOW I...
I'VE GOTTA
DEAL WITH
IT...

IF I DON'T
WHIP AN INNOCENT
BROTHER...CAZA
DIES...

NOT JUST
ME, PLIER--!



ALL OF HISTORY--THE WORLD!

ACE!!

HUH? NO
BRIDGE--THIS
ERA CAN'T
HACK A
GUN!



AND LIKE BRUTUS,
HATING THE DEED
BUT KNOWING IT
MUST BE DONE--

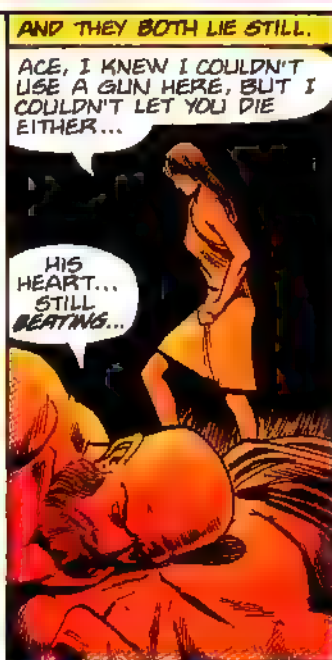
SHRUMP

--PLIER
DOES IT...



...RESTORING MY BREATH
IN RAGGED GASPS.

GO...TO...
SLEEP.



AND THEY BOTH LIE STILL.

ACE, I KNEW I COULDN'T
USE A GUN HERE, BUT I
COULDN'T LET YOU DIE
EITHER...

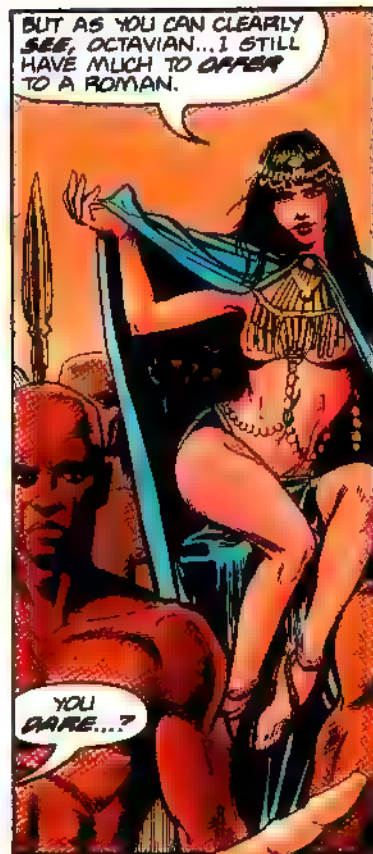
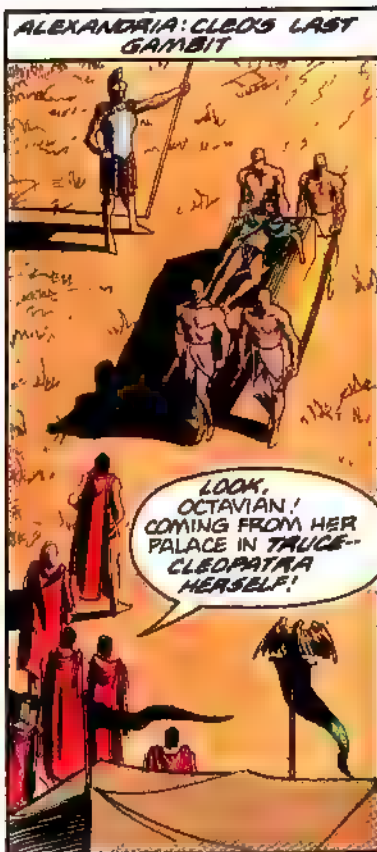
HIS
HEART...
STILL
BEATING...



THANK GOD,
CAZA...HE'S
ALIVE!

AND I HAVEN'T
THE HEART TO
TELL HIM...

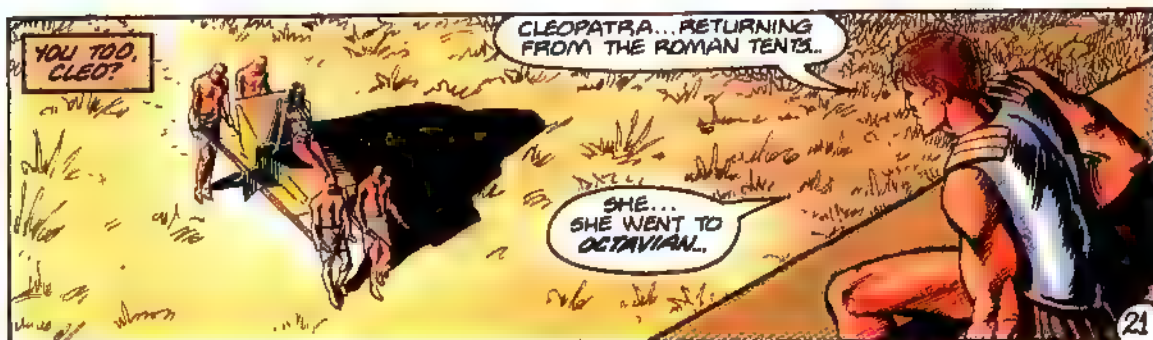
...THE ABSENCE OF A DOXIE-
GLITCH WAS DIAGNOSIS
ENOUGH.



AND SO I'VE
FAILED...AS I KNEW
I WOULD...BUT BY
THE FIVE WORLDS
BEYOND...



--THERE IS
STILL THE LAST
GAMBIT TO
COME...





SHE BETRAYED ME... BETRAYED THE GREAT MARK ANTONY... AND SHE FAILED.

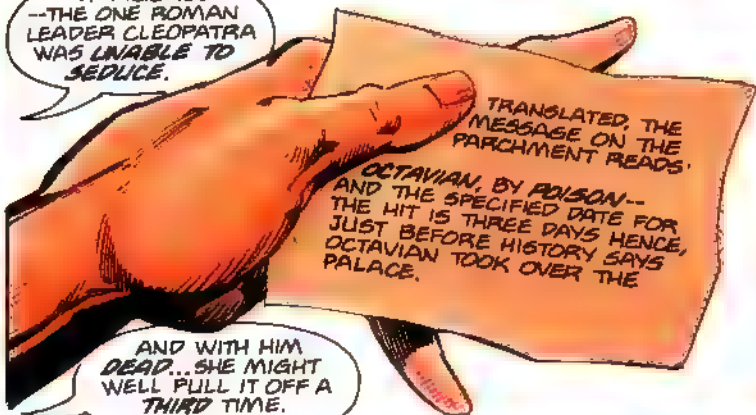
I AM NO LONGER GREAT... I AM DEAD IN EGYPT.

EGYPTIAN BOX OF A PLOT.



NOW TO SEE WHAT NAME IS ON THE--

IT FIGURES--
--THE ONE ROMAN LEADER CLEOPATRA WAS UNABLE TO SEDUCE.



TRANSLATED, THE MESSAGE ON THE PARCHMENT READS:

OCTAVIAN, BY POISON--
AND THE SPECIFIED DATE FOR THE HIT IS THREE DAYS HENCE, JUST BEFORE HISTORY SAYS OCTAVIAN TOOK OVER THE PALACE.

AND WITH HIM DEAD... SHE MIGHT WELL PULL IT OFF A THIRD TIME.

BUT SHE WON'T HAVE THE CHANCE, CAZA, NOW THAT WE'VE STOPPED THE ASSASSINATION.

YES... BUT WE'VE GOT TO DO BETTER THAN THAT, PUER.

WE'VE GOT TO LET THE ASSASSIN MAKE HIS KILL... AFTER WE CHANGE THE NAME IN THE BOX.

AND WHAT NAME ARE WE GOING TO--

OH... I SEE.

BETTER HURRY IT UP, THEN, 'CAUSE WE STILL GOTTA GET THE BOX INTO THAT CAVE--

"--BEFORE THE ASSASSIN ARRIVES FOR HIS ORDERS."



AHH... JUST AS PROMISED.



OH--THE
VICTIM IS
PROMINENT
INDEED.

AND THE
METHOD...
UNIQUE...



BUT WITH
THE ROMANS
ALREADY BESIEGING
ALEXANDRIA, SUR-
ROUNDING THE
PALACE...HOW
TO MAKE THE
KILL...?



UNLESS...
I MAKE OF THIS
BOX ITSELF THE
INSTRUMENT OF
SUCCESS...

...AND THERE
WOULD THEN BE NO
NEED TO DELIVER
PROOF OF THE KILL...

...SINCE THE GARBAGE
WILL ALREADY BE
WITHIN THE PALACE.

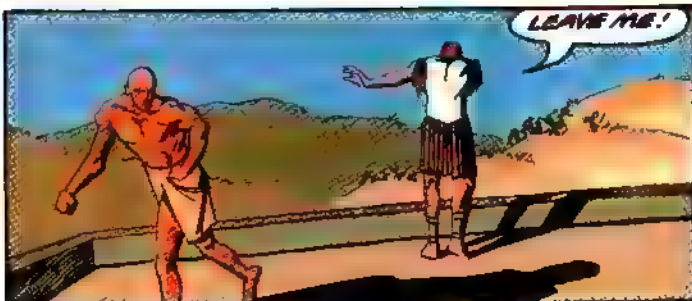


MURDER BY
SUICIDE.

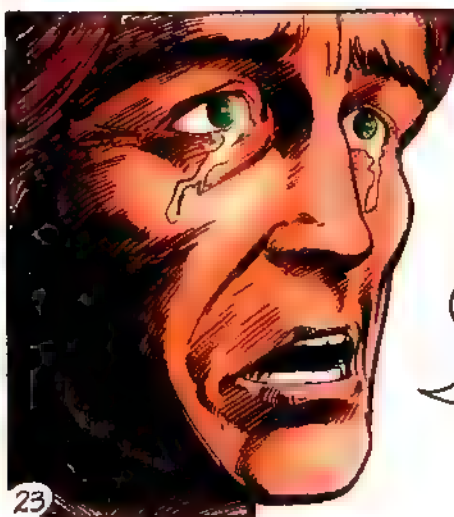
WHAT?!



CLEOPATRA...HAS
...KILLED HERSELF?!
WHAT MAD NEWS DO
YOU BRING ME,
SLAVE?!



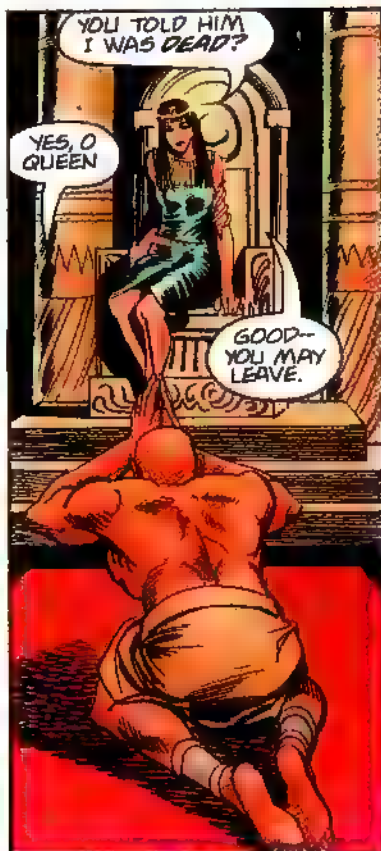
LEAVE ME!

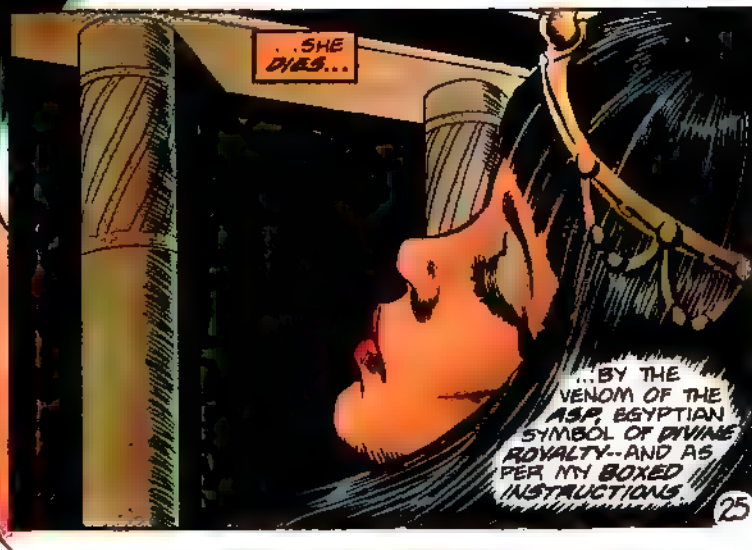


AND
THE STARS ARE
SILENT...

THERE IS
NOTHING LEFT
FOR ME...

...NO ORACULAR
SIGN ETCHED IN THE
DARK SKY...





DARK LADY OF BRIDGET

DID WE REALLY HAVE TO DO IT **THIS** WAY, ACE?

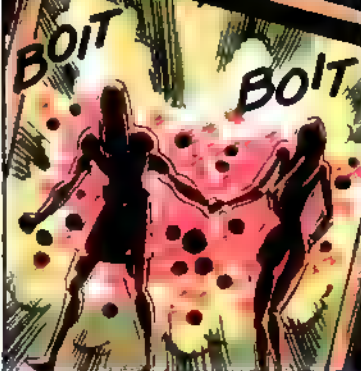
WHY COULDN'T WE HAVE JUST TAKEN OCTAVIAN'S NAME OUT AND LEFT THE BOX **EMPTY**?

AND **THIS** TIME, BRIDGET'S TREMBLING IS **VIOLENT**

BECAUSE OUR GOAL WAS TO **PRESERVE HISTORY** BRIDGET, NOT JUST SAVE OCTAVIAN'S LIFE...

...AND **THIS** IS THE WAY IT **HAPPENED**

WILLINGLY OR NOT, CLEO **HAD** TO COMMIT **SUICIDE**.



PUER'S STILL RECOVERING IN THE **ANACHRONY DEN, CAZA** --MUST HAVE BEEN A **HEAVY TRIP**.

I PRESUME YOU SUCCEEDED WITH THE **LAST PHASE**?

BOIT

BOIT

YES, TEMPUS...TURNS OUT THE **QUEEN** WAS AN **EBONATI**.

AND, DAMN IT, NOW THERE'S A **NEW TASK** AHEAD OF US...

FOR THE MOMENT PUER DOZES PEACEFULLY ON THE LOUIS XVI CHAISE-LONGUE, "PURPLE HAZE" BY HENDRIX BLASTING FROM THE JUKEBOX, BUT SOONER OR LATER

WE'LL HAVE TO FIND AND RESCUE THE **REAL CLEOPATRA**

"KRAZY GLUE CAN'T FIX HISTORY."--RADIO COMMERCIAL, 1983

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JOSE
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SWASHBUCKLER
OF THE FUTURE!

IF YOU
HAVEN'T
CHECKED IT
OUT IN A
WHILE, YOU'LL
FIND SOME
INCREDIBLE
THINGS
HAVE
HAPPENED
WHILE
YOU WERE
GONE!

THE BOOK AND
THE MAN —
THEY'RE STILL
ONE OF A KIND!



JOSE ORTIZ



WITHOUT A
DOUBT THIS WAS A
TEMPLE IN ANCIENT
TIMES BEFORE THE
GREAT
CONTAMINATION.

THE PEOPLE
OF THE 20TH
CENTURY STILL
HAD FAITH IN THE
SUPERNATURAL.

EVERLASTING
RHETORICS ABOUT
THE GOOD AND THE
BAD... UNTIL THEY
THEMSELVES FINALLY
PUT AN END TO IT
ALL.

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Halls of Horror

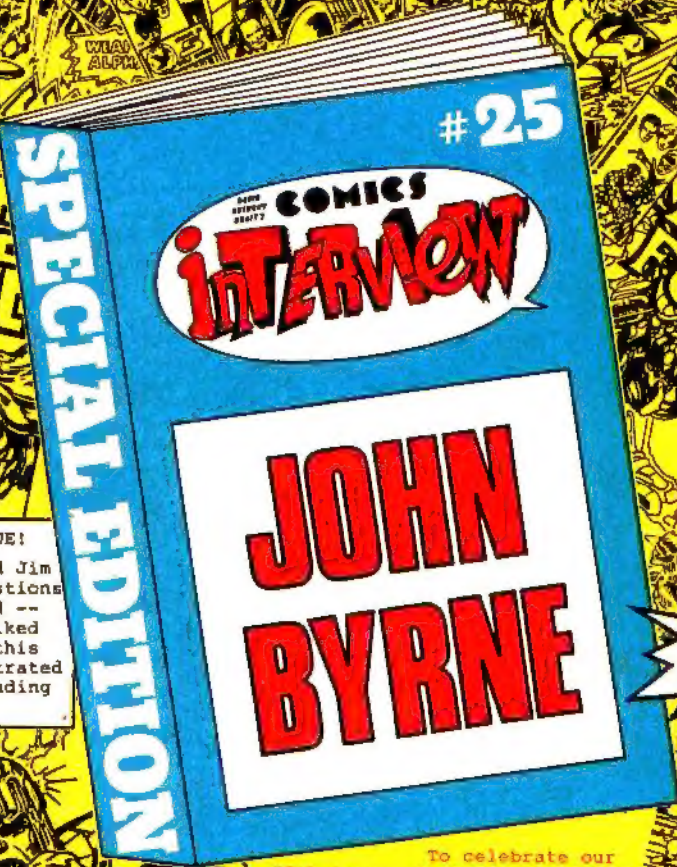
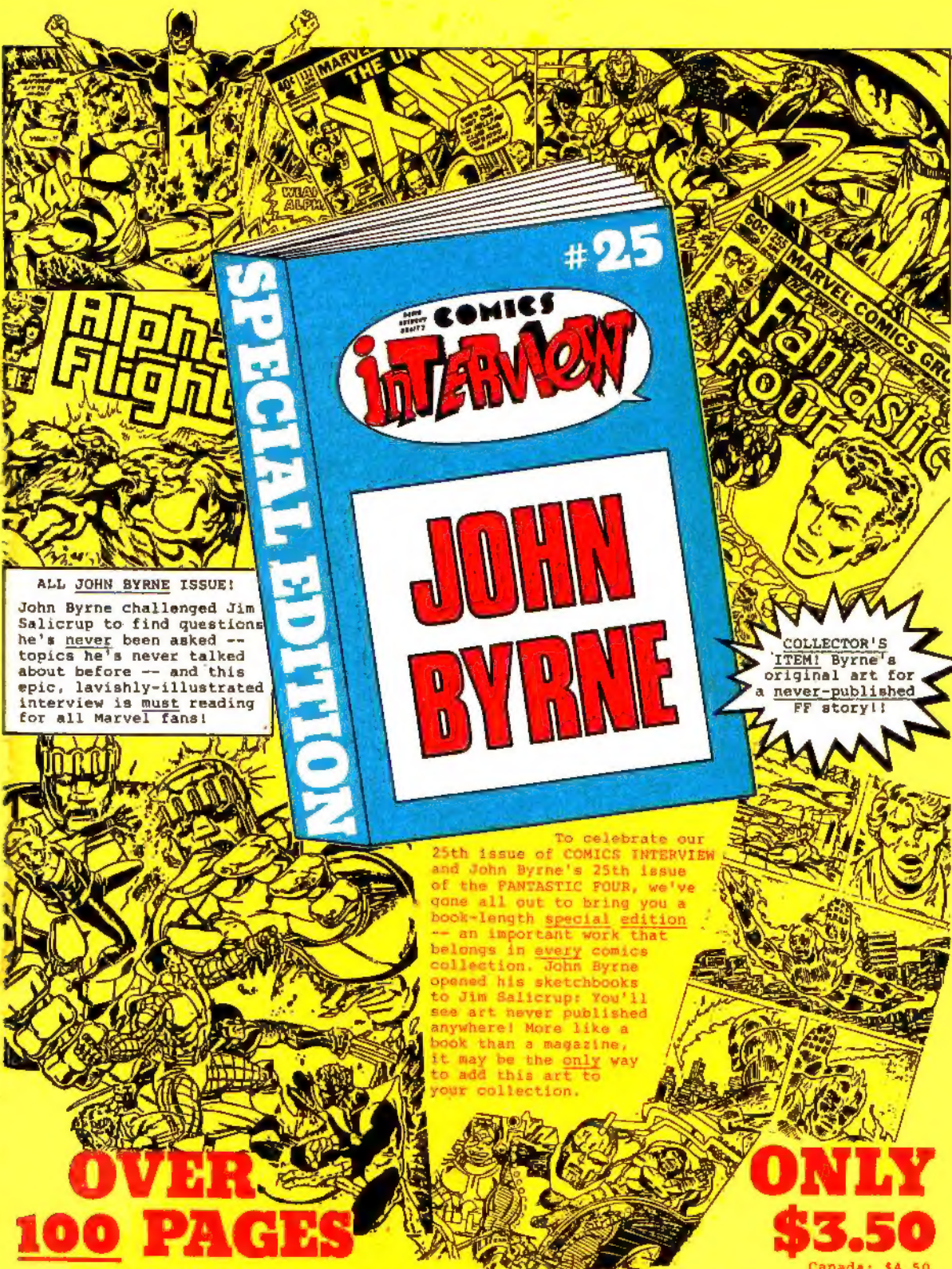
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